"5. The people rarely, if ever, sit on the ground. They always sit on a mat, and if there is none around, they will sit on a coconut husk, or any other object that happens to be about. At first I thought that sitting on the bare ground is tabooed behavior, perhaps the soil is holy. Upon inquiring I discovered that the real reason is much more prosiac. The natives simply do not like the feeling of the damp ground. I must have seemed boorish to the people when I first came, because I would sit on the ground without bothering about a mat or a coconut husk.

Usually the men sit on their haunches with their legs under them. The women sit with their legs stretched out, or with one leg stretched out, and one under them."

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
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Menstruating women on Ifaluk, as in many cultures, were subject to a variety of taboos. There were four special houses on the atoll which served as menstrual huts for each of the four villages into which the households were grouped. A woman, at the onset of menstruation, retired to one of these, removed from the ordinary life of the community until her period was over.

The census-taking was not a rapid process. It took interminable palavering among Tom, the chiefs and the members of each household to get a list of names, with clan affiliations, marital status, and such-like lore dear to the anthropological heart. When the list was complete, Don supervised the weighing and taking of heights—the only physical measurements practical with the available equipment. The weights were taken on a set of ordinary bathroom scales that had been picked up in Guam. The measuring pole was less prosaic—made from a pole found in the Fan Nap and calibrated to the nearest quarter inch by marking with a ball-point pen. Maroligar officiated at the weighing and measuring; after he had watched the first two or three operations, he explained to each person where to put his feet on the scales, tried to persuade him to stand up straight for the measuring, and coaxed the shier women and children into cooperating.

In the meantime I would prowl around with the big Crown Graphic camera, snapping whatever caught my interest, and popping flash-bulbs to the delight of the children who had a new toy in the used bulbs.

There was plenty of time to look around while Ted was trying to get all of the names and relationships straight. We noticed that the houses were well built, with big posts stuck in the ground to which stringers and rafters were firmly lashed with stout coconut-fiber rope; the roofs were coconut thatch, and the walls were mats woven of coconut leaves. The houses were low, and people did not stand in them, but sat or sprawled on the floor, which was very clean and covered with plaited coconut mats. There were no windows as such, but each house had four to six doors, which could be closed with more coconut mats when desired. The interiors were dim—but there was no need for good reading light. There was little or no clutter on the floor, except for a few things propped against the walls. Most of the family posses-

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

353 sions were put in bags or boxes of various sorts and slung by ropes from the rafters, the whole upper part of the house thus being a sort of floorless attic.

123 125 The citizens of Ifaluk cooperated nicely in the census operation, though they seemed rather amused at such strange antics. Those who had been weighed and measured loved to stand around and watch the rest as they passed through the routine. It was hard to get some of the people, especially the women, to stand up straight enough for a proper height measurement. They had, in many cases, what seemed to be a permanent crouch, perhaps resulting from the low doorways and interiors, perhaps the product of a sort of chronic deference, since the women of Ifaluk knew their place—always bowing respectfully in the presence of the male animal. (Ted suspected that this show was superficial and that the women, there as everywhere, knew their power and how to use it; one of the five chiefs, it turned out, was a woman.)

291 There were no ideas of modesty associated with the breasts; and the ladies didn't seem to be bothered by the fact that their skirts gaped rather badly near the belt-line behind. But they were very modest about legs from the knee up and were careful never to expose an inch of thigh. Their preoccupation with keeping their skirts close about their legs was clear enough as they stepped on the scales. Don, impressed by their modest maneuvers as he tried to read the dial on the scales, remarked that they would really be shocked by an American bathing suit.

855 861 The people seemed to take wonderful care of the children, the men holding babies and comforting the young as often as the women. Ted and his colleague, Spiro, in their 1948 study, found that the kids were never spanked, and rarely yelled at—though it was said that they sometimes doused them in the lagoon if they got too obstreperous. At the movies on the NETTLE Don noticed one man gently ladling sea water on a bawling baby. The baby stopped crying quickly—and he made a mental note to try this on his own daughter when he got back home.

854 The smallest infants were in cradles. These were square boxes with low sides, fastened by a bridle of cords from the corners, and suspended a few inches above the floor by a rope from the rafters. The babies were tucked in with some old clothes, and seemed contented enough.

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
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ABOVE Canoe of food walled the kitchen area: Tol Burrows sometimes propped himself cozily there to read at night.

BELOW Don proposed a trade of English houses for houses in Habibian.

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[P. 32(B)]

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
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ABOVE There was little clutter on the floor of the houses: most family possessions were slung from the rafters.

BELOW The people of Ifaluk cooperated nicely in the census operation.

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[p. 64 (A)]

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
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LEFT Yaniseman, constant companion and adviser.

RIGHT Totogoeiti (Tom), navigator and interpreter.

BELOW Fagolier, the paramount chief; and Gavileisei, craftsman and canoe builder.

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[P. 64 (B)]

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
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RIGHT Sagolimar, who often worked with us.

LEFT Canainig, navigator and canoe builder.

BELOW Toroman, the number three chief and official divider of food.

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[P. 64(c)]

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
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Ifaluk

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ABOVE The boondocks were not exactly wild; they were not exactly cultivated either.

BELOW We tried to collect botanical specimens of all of the kinds of plants on the atoll.

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[P. 64 (D)]